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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------004374 171955Z /66
O 171845Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NAIACT IMMEDIATE 9767
AMEMBASY BRUSSELS NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 4931

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, CG, CASC
SUBJECT: SHABA ATTACK: FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITH BELGIANS AND FRENCH ON POSSIBLE RESCUE OPERATION

REF: KINSHASA 4920

1. I MET AGAIN WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR ROSS AND BELGIAN AMBASSADOR RITTWEGER DE MOOR LATE AFTERNOON MAY 17.

2. RITTWEGER DE MOOR SAID HE HAD SEEN MOBUTU FOLLOWING OUR MEETING THIS MORNING, AND ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM BRUSSELS, HAD PROPOSED GOZ ACCEPTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS REPRESENTATIVES AT KOLWEZI TO LOOK AFTER PLIGHT OF CIVILIANS THERE. AFTER EXPRESSING

HIS DISTRUST OF IRC (WHICH BOTH MY BELGIAN AND FRENCH COLLEAGUES SEEM TO SHARE), MOBUTU AGREED SO LONG AS IRC REP-RESENTATIVES STRICTLY LIMITED TO KOLWEZI AREA.

3. RITTWEGER DE MOOR THEN RAISED WITH MOBUTU POSSIBILITY OF AN INTERNATIONAL RESCUE OPERATION AT KOLWEZI. HE SAID THIS WOULD INVOLVE THE BELGIANS AND FRENCH, AND, HOPEFULLY THE CONFIDENTIAL

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AMERICANS AS WELL. MOBUTU LISTENED, NODDED HIS AGREEMENT, AND SAID ALL HE NEEDED WAS TO BE TOLD JUST ENOUGH IN ADVANCE IN ORDER TO GIVE PROPER INSTRUCTIONS TO FAZ FORCES IN THE AREA.

4. RITTWEGER DE MOOR THEN TOLD US HE HAD RECEIVED SEVERAL ALARMING CABLE SFROM HIS CONSUL GENERAL IN LUBUMBASHI, WHO

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IS STILL IN CONTACT WITH CERTAIN BELGIANS IN KOLWEZI. ONE CABLE REPORTED INCREASING DISORDERS IN KOLWEZI WITH FROM "10-100 EUROPEANS KILLED." HE THEN READ US THE TEXT OF A SECOND CABLE RECEIVED FROM BELGIAN CONSUL GENERAL LUBUMBASHI AT 1300 HOURS MAY 17. THIS REPORTED INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM HIGH OFFICIAL (BOWENS) OF GECAMINES EXPANSION PROJECT KOLWEZI REPORTING "MANY DEATHS" AND BEGINNING OF SEARCH BY KATANGAN REBELS FOR FRENCH CITIZENS, SEVERAL OF WHOM HAD ALREADY BECOME VICTIMS. BELGIAN COUNSUL GENERAL ALSO REPORTS HE HAS SENT ASSISTANT TO INVESTIGATE "SERIOUS DETERIORATION AT LIKASI" WITHOUT GIVING CLARIFICATION. HE HAS URGED BRUSSELS TO MOUNT IMMEDIATE RESCUE OPERATION WITHIN NEXT 24 HOURS, EXPRESSING VIEW THAT ANY FURTHER DELAY WILL RISK MASSACRE. BELGIAN AMBASSADOR ASSURES ME THAT HIS CONSUL GENERAL IS EXPERIENCED, LEVEL-HEADED INDIVIDUAL, AND HIS MESSAGES MUST BE VIEWED IN THAT LIGHT.

5. COMMENT: AS CAN BE IMAGINED, MY BELGIAN AND FRENCH COLLEAGUES HAVE REACTED WITH EXTREME ALARM TO REPORTS FROM LUBUMBASHI AND I BELIEVE BOTH ARE RECOMMENDING TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS THAT RESCUE OPERATION BE UNDERTAKEN ASAP. BOTH URGED THAT THE US JOIN THEM, ROSS STATING THAT OUR APPROVAL AND SUPPORT WERE VITAL EVEN IF WE ACTUALLY DID VERY LITTLE. BELGIAN INTERPRETS MOBUTU'S REACTION TO THE IDEA OF A RESCUE MISSION (WHICH CONTRASTS MARKEDLY TO HIS AIR OF CONFIDENCE YESTERDAY) AS INDICATING HE IS LOSING HOPE THAT FAZ CAN COPE WITH KOLWEZI SITUATION.
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MY RECOMMENDATIONS STILL REMAIN VALID.

6. CONSUL GENERAL LUBUMBASHI PLEASE COMMENT ON REPORTS BELGIAN CONSUL GENERAL (VAN MOSSEVELDE) IS SENDING BRUSSELS. DEPARTMENT PLEASE REPEAT THIS AND REFTEL TO OTHER ADDRESSES AS DESIRED.
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